

MAKING OF A REVOLUTION: DANIEL, REVELATION AND THE PORTUGUESE RESTORATION OF 1640

Maria Ana T. Valdez
ana.valdez@yale.edu
Postdoctoral Fellow, Yale University

ABSTRACT

The Portuguese Restoration of 1640 put an end to the union of the Iberian Crowns. Historians normally explain it as the result of a mix of historical, economic, and social conditions. Religious beliefs, however, were one of the strongest motifs used to catapult the “revolution” against Spain, while explaining how such a small kingdom as Portugal was God’s chosen nation to lead humankind towards the end of time. This eschatological ideal is particularly important among members of the Society of Jesus.

In this paper, it is our goal to further explore sixteenth-century theoretical conceptualizations regarding the establishment of the “Fifth Empire” as forecast in Daniel and in Revelation. For this, we will analyze the work of a Portuguese Jesuit, António Vieira: the *History of the Future* and the *Clavis Prophetarum*. Vieira, in his two books concerning this concept of the end of time, first follows a panegyric approach of the Portuguese people; and later, in light of biblical texts, explains Portuguese supremacy and the role to be played by the Portuguese monarch.

It is our aim to demonstrate how texts such as Daniel and Revelation, given their timeless character, can be used in other historical moments of distress similar to those of the turn of the Era.

You are probably thinking what Daniel, Revelation, and the Portuguese Revolution of 1640 may have in common. My first answer would be: apparently, nothing. A more elaborate answer would, however, stress how they are much more alike than one could imagine. On one side, all reflect real and even similar historical events. Most importantly, however, religious expectations of the described peoples are mostly the same: the belief that the kingdom of God is finally at hand. Thus, political and social tribulation, as it takes place during these three moments in history, is not arbitrary: it is necessary. It is part of God’s divine plan.

The year of 1640, more precisely, December 1, 1640, marked the end of the so-called *Iberian Union*. Normally described by historiography as a bloodless and non-violent episode, the actions taken by some Portuguese men in this particular moment constitute, nonetheless, a revolution that would dramatically change the broader European *status quo*. Portugal resumes its independence and a new king from the House of Braganza is chosen and sworn. The Duke of Braganza, the highest member of Portuguese no-

bility, decides to take the pledge after years of non-commitment to the revolutionary cause. From this moment onwards, Portugal engages in a war with Spain and Europe to restore its borders and obtain international acknowledgment of its independence.

During this interlude of sixty-years – 1580-1640 – the Portuguese empire was under Spanish dominion. Simply put, this happened because of an old and dangerous Portuguese royal policy of Iberian intermarriages,¹ conjugated with the acts of a reckless young king. In the past, similar hazardous circumstances had threatened Portuguese and/or Castilian independencies.² The events of 1578, however, originated the real circumstances in which such *union* had to take place.

Young king D. Sebastião influenced, perhaps has some have written, by his Jesuit education, had since the beginning of his reign shown the desire to engage on a crusade against the Moors. His wishes were partially fulfilled in 1578 when one of the pretenders to the Moroccan throne requested his help to beat his opponent. Sebastião, against the will and advice of his Council and of his uncle Philip II,³ decided to take the pledge. With him went to Morocco the majority of the male members of Portuguese nobility. When the king disappeared in the battle of Ksar el-Kibir, he left no heir. Furthermore, Portuguese nobility was seriously hit, as most of its members had also lost their lives in the battlefield.

Sebastião was succeeded in the Portuguese throne by his uncle D. Henrique, a cardinal. The cardinal-king, as he became known, was already of old age. Moreover, as a catholic cardinal, Henrique had no children.⁴ When he died in January 31, 1580, he left neither a Council of Regency to choose an heir nor did he appoint on his will. This was the beginning of a battle – legal and armed – for the Portuguese throne that involved three grandsons of king D. Manuel: Catherine of Braganza, Philip II, and António, prior of Crato.⁵ The latter, although gathering popular support (peasantry and merchants), was an illegitimate grandson of King Manuel. Thus, he was the one whose claims had less legal value. Ultimately, the troops of Philip II led by the Duke of Alba beaten those of António in August 1580. Philip II was then accepted by the Portuguese *cortes* of Tomar – the Portuguese council where the three states (nobility, clergy, and peasantry) seated together – and crowned King of Portugal in 1581. It was the beginning of the *Iberian Union*, a union of two crowns under one single monarch. This was, in practice, the result of King Manuel's Ordinances of 1521. As he had himself envisaged an Iberian Union, he had passed laws that reaffirmed Portugal's independency.⁶ Manuel dreamt about extending his power over the entire Iberian world, but he was quite decided to make sure that no Spanish monarch would do the same to Portugal.

¹ The Castilian also engaged in a similar policy. They would, however, search now and then for marriages outside the Peninsula, which made them avoid more crisis like this one. For further bibliography, see {Elliott, 2002 #43}

² For further examples, see the Portuguese crisis of 1483-5 or observe the marriage of D. Manuel with the daughter of the Catholic Monarchs. See, {Disney, 2009 #21}

³ Philip II was at the time trying to negotiate truce with the Turks. Thus, such enterprise would definitely compromise his objectives of peace.

⁴ Papal dispensation was requested from his vows so that he could try to beget an heir.

⁵ See {Disney, 2009 #21}

⁶ For further Information on this subject, see *Ordenações Manuelinas*.

Philip II – I of Portugal – enjoyed an initial period of grace in Portugal. At first, he followed Portuguese Ordinances and a Council of Portugal was formed to manage all businesses regarding the Portuguese Empire in an independent way from those of the Spanish Empire. Philip II also set his court for some months in Lisbon before moving it to Madrid.⁷ Things would change, however, as Philip got more and more involved in the sixteenth-century European religious wars. Thus, his, and later his heirs, relationship with the Council of Portugal, changed over the years. This is particularly true whenever he needed to gather money and men to fight Protestants in Northern Europe, a fight strange to Portugal and in which there could be found no reason to participate by members of the Council of Portugal. Another good example of this policy of integration of Portugal as if it were another Spanish province, is the *Invincible Armada* sent in 1588 against England and Elizabeth, for which Portuguese resources had been requested although, again, this was not a Portuguese cause.⁸

During the sixty years of Iberian Union policies regarding Portugal, especially those concerning the individuality and independence of the Council of Portugal, changed dramatically. Whenever more taxes were demanded from the Portuguese, or when the Council of Portugal lost most of its power within the Spanish court, *sebastianismo* spread and gained influence. This movement assumed that late king Sebastião would return at any moment to save Portugal from the Spanish yoke. Although originally a popular movement, its echoes soon can be found among the best educated people and spreading in the midst of Portuguese nobility and clergy. *Sebastianism* became yet another early modern expression of the Iberian quest for the *encubierto*. As its popularity grew, several persons at different moments and places were identified as the dead king, and thus, supported by members of Portuguese nobility.⁹ Somehow, biblical prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and the end of the danielic “tribulation” strongly echoed in the Portuguese empire during this period. Consequently, several persons were eager trying to identify the *desired king* while making sure to underline his divine character. António Vieira, the famous Portuguese Jesuit, was probably one of the most accomplished and complex biblical interpreters of his time. Nevertheless, he was not a follower of *sebastianism*, but a supporter of the new Portuguese dynasty – the House of Braganza.

Before moving forward, let us just remember how this kind of expectation on the coming of a savior-type figure is not strange to Iberian history. This theme is found often in the Peninsula: the figure of *El Cid* is certainly one of its major examples. Another example is that of with King John I who succeeded to ascend to the Portuguese throne in 1385 when Portugal’s independency was at stake.

In the sixteenth century, Bandarra,¹⁰ the Portuguese popular prophet from Trancoso who could read

⁷ At this time in history, Spain had not yet a defined geographical court. As many others in Europe, it was still an itinerant court that followed the king on his travels across his realm.

⁸ See, {Elliott, 2002 #43} Furthermore, it is necessary to underline how this Portuguese participation in the *Armada* jeopardized all the businesses conducted between England and Portugal. One cannot forget how these two kingdoms are Europe’s oldest allies.

⁹ Probably the best example is the one of described in: {Olsen, 2003 #44}

¹⁰ António Gonalo Annes Bandarra (1500-56) was a shoemaker from Trancoso (northern Portugal) who read the Bible, especially the prophetic books, and published a book of messianic verses. His work was widely known despite the Inquisition efforts

and knew passages of the Bible by heart wrote a book of poems that became well known given its prophetic style. In *Trovas*, Bandarra interpreted biblical prophecies concerning the end of time, especially those of Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, always in accordance with Portuguese history, which reminds us of the ability of using timeless biblical prophecy within the scope of the temporal world as needed. His poems were so widespread and its content read and believed by so many, that at some point, 1660-61, he was accused of heresy by the Portuguese Inquisition. Considered a “foul,” he was set free after publicly abjuring. His book of *Trovas*, forbidden by the Inquisition later in 1665, circulated abundantly in print and manuscript forms. The verses were as well known in popular environments as in the more educated ones. They were read and kept at several Jesuit colleges of the time because their content agreed with some of the mysticism in vogue among Jesuits. It is curious to note, however, how this work was dedicated to the pope and to D. João III: it announced the fulfillment of biblical messianic hopes and the king’s future successes. This book, the *Trovas*, played a very important role in maintaining alive the hope of Portuguese independence from Spain during the Iberian Union. In his verses, Bandarra forecast the birth of the *desejado* (the wished one). When he did it, king D. João III was not succeeding in producing a living male heir. Later, when D. Sebastião was finally born, which occurred after his father’s death, he was immediately identified with the figure of the Iberian *desejado*. Thus, the mystical character of the figure of Sebastião. Later, when he disappeared in the battle of Ksar-el-Kebir in 1578, the myth of the return of the king was translated in to a strong popular believe in the return of the *encoberto*. Bandarra was also found as a “true prophet” by António Vieira later on, that being one of the reasons behind Vieira’s accusation by the Inquisition.

As mentioned, followers of *sebastianism* are found among all ranks of Portuguese society. The movement was never put to an end by the Spaniards in power, who apparently did not take seriously the possibility that such “mythology” could endanger Spanish dominion. Therefore, *sebastianism* took the form of a movement of “nationalist” character, used by its followers to promote the superiority of Portugal in relation to Spain.¹¹ A good example can be found in the work of António de Sousa Macedo, who wrote that Europe was a woman, Spain its head, and Portugal its crown in his book titled “*Flores de España excelências de Portugal*,” published in Lisbon in 1631, i.e., during the Iberian Union.¹²

Within this highly mystical and prophetic environment, particular attention should be given to the role of the Society of Jesus in Portugal. As Portugal’s main educators, the Jesuits were able to influence not only their current pupils, but also previous ones. At this moment, the Jesuits played an influential role: they disseminated in the public domain prophecies regarding the coming of a savior-king, many of them laying upon biblical prophecies such as Daniel and Revelation. The idea that the end of the world was at hand was more and more appealing in the Portuguese empire. The conjugation of such belief with the specific historical circumstances explain in part why the Jesuits supported the revolt of 1637 in Évora, the first against Spain.

to forbid its circulation.

¹¹ For further information about this movement, we recommend reading {Azevedo, 1984 #67}

¹² {Sousa de Macedo, 2003 #117}

The political, economic, and even social situation of the Portuguese realm was unbearable to the eyes of the Portuguese. Thus, one can easily comprehend how movements of national character combined with the content of biblical prophecies spread easily and were quickly embraced. One of the most important examples of such attitude is found in the description of the Portuguese foundational myth: the miracle of Ourique. The Cistercian monk, Fr Bernardo de Brito, published a series of works supporting the myth that Christ had appeared to Afonso Henriques, the first Portuguese king, on the eve of the battle of Ourique to reassure him of his victory. The timeframe of the *Iberian Union* is a key moment for the implementation of theories regarding Portuguese divine kingship. In a certain measure, the *Iberian Union* was compared to what happened to the Israelites when they were taken into captivity to Babylon. The biblical return to Jerusalem was thus to be understood as a sign of the forthcoming Portuguese restoration. In a word, the king would return to Lisbon.

All of the above mentioned concepts – chosen nation, divine predestination, and tribulation – were common subjects in early modern Portugal. Furthermore, it is necessary to not forget, how Portuguese kings had used the excuse of “crusade against the gentiles and the infidels” to support and explain their maritime enterprise. Not only were they engaged in fighting the infidels and the gentiles, but they were also searching for the Christian kingdom of Prester John while engaging in a worldwide effort of evangelization following papal instructions.

All of this together, weighted in the course of Portuguese history. The most important facts to retain concern how this people of sailors understood itself, as a divinely chosen nation forecast to universally spread the Gospel and lead Christendom to the time of the end. Such attitude surely influenced the construction of Portuguese identity as it was used to explain and fight for their supremacy in the sea before the papacy and remaining European crowns of the time. Accordingly, Portugal was the new Israel, the new chosen nation, and therefore it had a divine destiny to fulfill. No other earthly prince, not even the pope, could interfere with such fate.

It is exactly the question of a divine predestined role to be played by Portugal that lays at the center of Vieira’s eschatological work. Scholars discuss when was that Vieira first engaged in eschatological discourse. This is, however, a question for which we have no clear answer, although we can find eschatological traces in sermons preached after his arrival to Lisbon in 1641. Nevertheless, there are three major works that should be accounted for as Vieira’s main eschatological pieces of thought. The first was a letter written to Queen D. Luisa after the king’s death in 1655. The second is an unfinished book titled *History of the Future*. The third, and the one considered by Vieira as his *opus magnum*, was the *Clavis Prophetarum* yet another unfinished book.

The initial use of eschatological references in António Vieira’s work resulted from his need to please the king by promoting the solidification of his fragile kingship. Notwithstanding, it appears possible to affirm that his work represents a much more elaborate construction than one could initially expect. It can be considered as a systematic construction, probably the result of many years of personal questioning on the reasons why the promised divine kingdom had not yet happened. The apparent imminence of the end of time that every commentator seems to have emphasized over the centuries has been, if we go back

as far as the time of the edition of Daniel, delayed for about 1800 years. There had to be a reason for that. Consequently, the search for signs confirming the authenticity of biblical prophecies represents natural human behavior. The fact that the world was not yet completely evangelized, together with the existence of several religions/sects rather than one global union under Christianity – necessary to be attained according to Revelation – plays an important role in Vieira's work. Hence, it is clear that his personal convictions influenced in part his systematization since the beginning of his eschatological career. Additionally, it is necessary to remember how intertwined were the interests of the Portuguese crown with those of the Society of Jesus. Thus, Vieira's theorization regarding the Fifth Empire represents necessarily more than simple political theory.

The epoch in which the Jesuit lived, 1608-1697, was also a particular one: it saw daily events as part of a divine eschatological plan. The world was getting ready for the imminent advent of the Kingdom of God and for the Last Judgment. Furthermore, the world was understood in accordance with the sequence of empires described in the book of Daniel. This probably explains Vieira's mention of a Fifth Empire to come, a concept that he fully analyses in his eschatological works. The content of the book of Daniel becomes to Vieira, what S. Peloso describes as an "exemplar image of a 'mundi historia,' and in particular, of political history, generating philosophies and systems of interpretation of historical events."¹³ This is important to understand Vieira's thought regarding his explanation of events of the history of Portugal in light of the biblical prophecies, especially those concerning the future of the realm.

Esperanças de Portugal, the first complete example of eschatological work by António Vieira, is the name of the famous letter he wrote while navigating the waters of the Amazon River. The letter was sent to the elected bishop of Japan and the Queen's confessor, his friend Fr André Fernandes,¹⁴ with the purpose of providing some comforting words to Queen D. Luísa of Gusmão after the death of D. João IV. In fact, the death of the king marks the rebirth of *sebastianism*.¹⁵ Once again, attempts to demonstrate that D. João IV could not be the much-anticipated *encoberto* become common.¹⁶ Political circumstances surrounding the events after the death of D. João IV appeared everything but favourable to his identification as the *encoberto*. Thus, the polemic that follows.

It is clear that a document written by Vieira cannot be a simple letter, but most probably, a treatise in which he describes his theory concerning the Fifth Empire while forecasting the resurrection of the Portuguese monarch. This means that we have in front of us what was called in Portugal at the time a

¹³ {Peloso, 1997 #118@177}

¹⁴ Born in Viana do Alentejo in 1607, he entered the Company of Jesus in 1622. He studied humanities and philosophy at Coimbra between 1625 and 1629, and then theology at Évora between 1633 and 1639. He was elected bishop of Japan in 1649 by D. João IV, but he was never confirmed by Rome because the Holy See did not recognize Portuguese independence until much later. Meanwhile, he was the confessor of the prince D. Teodósio, and later he also became the confessor of the kings. He was charged with the task of presiding over the "Junta das Missões," created in 1655. Therefore, it is possible to assume that he and Vieira exchanged several letters during this period because of the Missions in Brazil. He died in Lisbon on 27 October 1660, six months after delivering a copy of Vieira's letter to the Inquisition and 13 months before Vieira's return from Brazil.

¹⁵ Group that supported the hope for the return of the late king D. Sebastião.

¹⁶ *Encoberto* in Portuguese and *encubierto* in Spanish are synonyms for the covert royal figures supposed to come back at times of distress. From this point onward we will keep with the Portuguese nomenclature of this phenomenon.

“papel.”¹⁷ This form of treatise may also explain why the letter’s frontispiece as we have it today is very similar to the one that a later publication of the letter would contain:¹⁸

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| <i>Esperanças de Portugal</i> | Hopes of Portugal |
| <i>Quinto Império do Mundo</i> | Fifth World Empire |
| <i>Primeira e Segunda Vida del-Rei d. João o Quarto</i> | First and Second Life of H.R.M. D. João IV |
| <i>Escritas por Gonçaleanes Bandarra</i> | Written by Gonçaleanes Bandarra |

Above all, it is necessary to note how Vieira describes his “prophecies” as “written by Bandarra.” As J.J. van den Besselaar writes, “we know with certainty that António Vieira took seriously the prophecies he collected, studied, and interpreted.”¹⁹ Therefore, it is not strange that the Jesuit had in mind something else that went beyond the simple “comforting” of the Queen, D. Luísa. It is easier for the historian familiar with Vieira to believe that the diplomat and the visionary shared a common theory concerning the future of the realm. If not, why was he wasting his time building such an elaborate system as the one described in this “simple” letter?

Three years earlier, he preached the *Sermon of Salvaterra* when the king was ill, and he said that the monarch could not die because he had not yet realized everything that had been prophesied by Bandarra. If we continue to explore this line of thinking, it is possible to accept that the letter was a continuation of such thoughts and beliefs. The content of the letter and the agitation around it were enough to call the attention of the Inquisition, which had long waited for an opportunity to publicly treat Vieira as an enemy.²⁰

The content of the letter leaves no room for doubt regarding Vieira’s intentions: “fight against the resume of *sebastianism* after the death of D. João IV.”²¹ However, is this political purpose as described by R. Cantel the only reason behind Vieira’s actions? Are we not also presented with some sort of personal profound belief in the biblical prophets and in the interpretation that Vieira made of the verses of Bandarra? In fact, what appears to have been considered more compromising by the Portuguese Inquisition was the syllogism that Vieira used in the letter to prove the veracity of the prophecies:²²

¹⁷ “*papel*” is a document or a treatise in which someone or a group of people would describe to the king a certain subject supporting their opinion and in which they would suggest how to deal with this subject.

¹⁸ Vieira, “*Esperanças de Portugal Quinto Império do mundo: Primeira e segunda vida del-rei D. João o quarto escritas por Gonçaleanes Bandarra*,” p. 49.

¹⁹ “sabemos com certeza que António Vieira levava a sério as profecias, que colecionava, estudava e interpretava,” in van den Besselaar, *Antônio Vieira, profecia e polêmica*, p. 35.

²⁰ To this, is it not strange the role that the Jesuit played in favor of the Jews and against the methods used by the Holy Office?

²¹ Cantel, *Prophétisme et messianisme dans l'oeuvre d'Antonio Vieira*, p. 182.

²² Vieira, “*Esperanças de Portugal Quinto Império do mundo: Primeira e segunda vida del-rei D. João o quarto escritas por Gonçaleanes Bandarra*,” p. 49.

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| <p><i>O Bandarra é verdadeiro profeta; O Bandarra profetizou que el-Rei D. João o 4.º há-de obrar muitas cousas que ainda não obrou, nem pode obrar senão ressuscitando; Logo, el-Rei D. João o 4.º há-de ressuscitar.</i></p> | <p>Bandarra is a true prophet: Bandarra prophesized that H.R.M. D. João IV will do many things that he has not yet done; nor can he do them unless he resurrects; Therefore, H.R.M. D. João IV will resurrect.</p> |
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The use of this kind of syllogism is not novelty. Many others had used this resource before to explain the difference between true and false biblical prophets. Vieira begins by saying that “the true proof of the prophetic spirit in men is the success of the prophesized things,”²³ and he continues by listing biblical examples. Among these, Vieira underlines the passage of Deuteronomy 18:21-22, where we read:

You may say to yourself, “How can we recognize a word that the LORD has not spoken?” If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it.

In the text of the *Esperanças de Portugal*, referring to Bandarra’s *Trovas*, Vieira underlines the importance of the subject of the war against the Turk, prophesized by Bandarra as an event that would take place only later, with the following words: “not be afraid of the Turk, not during this season.”²⁴ This type of commentary was only useful in supporting Vieira’s thesis regarding the veracity of Bandarra’s prophecies on the main character’s identity. In fact, in all of these events the king of Portugal would star, either in the present or in the future. Vieira also underlines how Bandarra had forecast that the pope was not going to accept the restoration of Portuguese independence. He stresses how that was so true that it happened not only with one pope, but with three. As he says, only the defeat of the Turk by the king of Portugal would force the pope to recognize the Portuguese sovereignty and its independence from Spain. For that, Vieira uses the verse where Bandarra says, concerning the pope’s acknowledgement, that “The bishops would not be given by the pope, but the Turk will.”²⁵

Another remarkable detail to be found in Vieira’s description is that the elected nation, the Hebrews, would be subjected “to the unbeaten “Quinas” of Portugal.”²⁶ Thus, demonstrating the supremacy of the king of Portugal in relation to the remaining nations at the time of the end. Then, during that moment of peace, when the knowledge of Christ would be universal, there would be only one *pastor*, the pope, and one monarch, the king of Portugal, and the two were God’s instruments.²⁷

When accused of predicting the resurrection of the king, Vieira makes an ironic commentary regarding how unthinkable it was that the king might be resurrected. He concludes by saying that this was

²³ “a verdadeira prova do espírito profético nos homens é o sucesso das cousas profetizadas,” in *ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁴ “Não tema o Turco, não, nesta sezaõ,” in *ibid.*

²⁵ “os bispos não no-os havia de dar o Papa, senão o Turco,” in *ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁶ “às invictas Quinas de Portugal,” in *ibid.*, p. 79.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

what Bandarra said, and since his prophecies had proved truthful until then, there was no reason to question the other prophecies regarding the future. Therefore, he writes, “In truth, after H.R.M. was dead and buried, his saying that he would still go to Jerusalem to conquer the Turk, appears excessive stubbornness, but that is the stubbornness of Bandarra.”²⁸ Is Vieira hiding behind a popular prophet to confirm his own forecasts? Apparently, he is.

By describing what he calls a “tragicomedy,” Vieira appears certain that all of the events supposed to happen in the future are part of God’s divine plan, so that humanity would finally reach the desired kingdom of God. In this way, Vieira launches the fundamentals of his theory of the Fifth Empire, one that would be continuously refuted by the authorities and time, bringing him many problems in the days to follow. Not even all of the vicissitudes he has to undertake, however, will make him change his opinion or retract before the Inquisition regarding the content of this letter.

For many scholars, the book *History of the Future* represents a further elaboration of the theory first exposed in the letter *Esperanças de Portugal*. As M.L. Buescu states, the similarities in content as well in the title, are reason enough to support this theory. Even if we account for the fact that the structure of the work is clearly different: the first is a letter, while the second is a treatise, or a manifesto.²⁹

Regarding the dating of this work, we shall assume that it was started – or at least conceived – before 1649, and that the theorization’s climax took place during the years that Vieira spent in Brazil, i.e., somewhere between 1653 and 1661. Nevertheless, 1664, the year he recorded in the manuscript and the one during which he answered before the Inquisition Court (the investigation took place between 1663 and 1667), appears to represent the beginning of a continuous process of writing of this book.

The *História do futuro, esperanças de Portugal & quinto império do mundo* (“History of the Future, Hopes of Portugal & Fifth World Empire”), envisions the description of the Fifth Empire during the consummation of the kingdom of Christ on earth. In accordance with Vieira, the prophets had already announced this consummation several centuries before, providing the reason why he exhorts his readers to read Daniel and Enoch. Vieira assumes that attempting to know the future is permissible to the human being, even if St Augustine said otherwise. At the same time, he wonders “if there were in the world a prophet of the past, why should there not be a historian of the future?”³⁰ This is a curious question: is this Vieira who “prophesies” the future the same one who affirms being only a historian? Is this modesty, or diplomacy?

This so long-announced kingdom was finally ready to be established on earth, and Vieira’s mission was to announce it to his contemporaries while making them aware of the preponderant role that Portugal and the Portuguese were going to have. Because Portugal was the chosen nation, Vieira explains some

²⁸ “Verdadeiramente, depois del-Rei estar morto e sepultado, dizer ainda que há-de ir a Jerusalém conquistar o Turco, parece demasiado teimar, mas essa é a teima do Bandarra,” in *ibid.*, p. 84.

²⁹ Vieira, *História Do futuro*, p. 13.

³⁰ “se já no mundo houve um profeta do passado, porque não haverá um historiador do futuro?” in Vieira, *História do futuro*, p. 53.

of the problems that they would have to overcome, similar to what the prophets of the Old Testament had done. As Vieira writes in chapter II, when speaking directly to the Portuguese: “Not all futures are to be wished, because there are many futures to be feared.”³¹

Furthermore, Vieira describes his particular mission as “The greatest service that a subject can do for his king is to reveal him the futures.”³² It is because of such sentences found in his book that we should agree with J.J. van den Besselaar’s opinion that this book was “more a prophetic interpretation, than a scientific thesis.”³³ In it, we also find a clear statement concerning Vieira’s faith, although it appears influenced by a clear use of Church authorities supporting his interpretation. J.J. van den Besselaar resumes the *História do futuro* as “A warm profession of faith, and the faith, in the non secularized world in which Vieira lived, hold not just religious dimensions, but also social and political ones,”³⁴ allowing us to understand the splendor, and at the same time the complexity of such work.

Like Daniel, Vieira offers his readers a universal overview of history, while underlining the importance of the Jews – who were the chosen ones of the Old Testament – and the fundamental role to be played by Portugal, thus generating what we can call a “lusocentric” theory, as J.J. van den Besselaar defines it.³⁵

By praising the future role of the Portuguese nation, Vieira creates an etymological confusion regarding the title of this document: he calls it *Esperanças de Portugal* (“Hopes of Portugal”), while saying that it contains the meaning of his *História do futuro* (“History of the Future”). Vieira is an artist of words and of the Portuguese language, and while he discusses how the “hopes” could be a “torment” because the forecast events would never happen, he underlines that even those events should not be taken for granted. This “torment” was therefore part of a broader process. Hence, it is easily explained how Vieira had in mind a difficult period that would anticipate the glory of the end, comparable to the *tribulation* described in the biblical books. For that reason, he commands the Portuguese to have hope on their glorious future. Therefore, he says, the reason why he wrote this book in Portuguese is so that they can read and understand that the future holds for them yet more glorious times than the Age of Discoveries. Thus, sacrifices and pain were necessary.

In this book, Vieira describes the four empires that anticipate the fifth. It is however, curious to note that he does not apply the imperial chronology used in the biblical books. Vieira makes clear references to the present and to the different world regions in a way that allows him to reaffirm the diversity of the existing empires: in Asia and China, the Tartars, Persians, and Mongols; in Africa, Ethiopia; in Europe, Germany and Spain; and in the three regions, the Turk, although the latter was not important enough

³¹ “Nem todos os futuros são para desejar, porque há muitos futuros para temer.” in *ibid.*, p. 55.

³² “O maior serviço que pode fazer um vassalo ao rei, é revelar-lhe os futuros.” in *ibid.*

³³ “mais uma visão profética do que uma tese científica” in *Idem, História do futuro*, p. 2.

³⁴ “calorosa profissão de fé, e a fé, no mundo ainda não secularizado em que Vieira vivia, tinha dimensões não só religiosas, mas também sociais e políticas” in *ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

to be mentioned by the prophets.³⁶ Therefore, it is not strange that the Fifth Empire may take place and succeed to the four empires described by Daniel. While describing the succession of empires, Vieira takes his time to explain the reasons behind the length of the Roman Empire³⁷ and how it had been transformed over the centuries, experiencing presently a moment of decadence and division into several smaller kingdoms, and how Portugal was one of those smaller kingdoms.

At this moment of his exegetical exposition, Vieira recalls Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue and its feet of clay and iron. This mixture represents, according to him, a forecast on how the Roman Empire would later be divided into smaller pieces, and which history had proven to be right. Consequently, the central power of the empire was condemned since the beginning to vanish due to successive and sustained fragility. But Vieira says that "the lack of union of the metals of which the feet were made of, meant the kingdoms of the Spaniards, Polish, English, French and the remaining, which, although before subjected to the Roman Emperors, had later refused being their subjects and disunited from them."³⁸ Of these kingdoms, Vieira detaches and highlights the Spanish and the Portuguese because of the Maritime Discoveries, fundamental for the enlargement of the world's limits. He underlines particularly the bravery of the Portuguese, who had departed toward the unknown Far East.

Since he had already demonstrated how biblical prophets had forecast this future empire, Vieira can now explain how this is the empire of Christ and of the Christians, in opposition to that of the Jews and Muslims. Continuing to demonstrate the veracity of his words through the authority of the prophets, Vieira writes that "it is a correct and faithful conclusion that this Fifth Empire of which we speak, announced and promised by the Prophets, is the Empire of Christ and of the Christians."³⁹ Hence, Vieira identifies the stone described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, which starts the final process of destruction, with the figure of Christ. However, as if this demonstration of divine will is not enough to confirm his interpretation, he uses the texts of Daniel 7 and Zechariah 5 to further prove his interpretation. From the first text mentioned, Vieira uses the image of the "Ancient of Days" as representing Christ. He applies a similar process when in the text of Zechariah he reads "Jesus, son of Jehozadak," although some of our current versions of the text refer to Joshua and not to Jesus.⁴⁰ For Vieira, all of these references represented foggy allusions to the fact that the kingdom of Christ was still to come. In addition, the image he uses from Daniel 7:18, where the kingship of the Holy Ones of the Most High was described, was for him another clear reference to a future yet to come.

Vieira's *opus magnum*, the *Clavis prophetarum* or *De regno Christi in terris consummato* is a much more elaborated example of his eschatological belief. It is, however, of a different type, as he no longer

³⁶ Vieira, *História do futuro*, p. 247.

³⁷ cf. part I, chapter 1 regarding the interpretation of the "four empires."

³⁸ "a desunião dos metais dos pés da estátua significava os reinos dos Espanhóis, Polacos, Ingleses, Franceses e os demais, que, sendo antes sujeitos aos Imperadores romanos, lhes negaram a sujeição e se desuniram deles." In *ibid.*, p. 272.

³⁹ "É conclusão certa e de fé que este Quinto Império de que falamos, anunciado e prometido pelos Profetas, é o Império de Cristo e dos Cristãos." In *ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴⁰ cf. Zach. 6, 11.

uses examples from Bandarra's Trovas, but supports his entire argumentation on examples from the Bible or from the Church's *authorities*.

António Vieira's major biographer, J.L. de Azevedo, described the *Clavis prophetarum* as part of the last period of Vieira's life, one during which Vieira is normally described as "beaten." But, on the other hand, this same period represents his intellectual climax.⁴¹ Eventual questions aside, Azevedo reaffirms how Vieira contemplated the content of this work throughout his entire life. Therefore, one should consider it to represent the corollary of his intellectual life. This consequently obliges the reader to consider it as a product written in places such as the Brazilian jungle, the Inquisitional Court, Rome, Lisbon, and later once again in Brazil. On the other hand, such interpretation offers the reader a very large chronological span regarding the creation of this work.

Fr Casnedi who was requested by the Inquisition to examine the book, writes in his *sententia* that Vieira's treatise consisted of three books, "as the Author says at the beginning of his work."⁴² According to Casnedi, Book I was devoted to the nature and quality of the Kingdom of God consummated on earth; book II was dedicated to the earthly consummation; and book III was about the time when these events should take place and for how long they would last. Casnedi denies that any moral imperfection could be found in this book. Nevertheless, while describing the physical imperfection of the manuscript he mentions that it was not clear whether it had been caused by the author, who did not finish his work, as "has guaranteed by some people that lived the last months before his death and the first days after it;"⁴³ or if it had been caused by the copying process.

The size and complexity of António Vieira's last work are almost impossible to describe. Therefore, and for matters of practicality, we are limiting our current analysis to the last book, the one that has been published in a critical edition (Latin and Portuguese) in 2000 and therefore available.⁴⁴

Vieira did not think it was problematic to attempt to define the time of a given event, even in the absence of information that would allow him to do it accurately. This was what he called "undetermined" knowledge, in opposition to "determined" knowledge regarding future events and/or their dates. Moreover, he mentions that it was Christ who wanted humankind to search for the date of the end of the world to determine whether it was close to the present. Good examples of this can be found, once again, in Daniel and Revelation. Although his main purpose was to justify his affirmations, Vieira cites names of those such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Jerome, Isidore of Seville, the Cardinal of Cuse, Pico della Mirandola, and Cornelius, who in the past followed interpretational paths similar to the one that Vieira was undertaking.⁴⁵ Consequently, ancient Church authorities and their works became Vieira's models

⁴¹ The biography of António Vieira as it was written by J.L. de Azevedo divides the life of the Jesuit into six main periods: the religious, the political, the missionary, the seer, the rebel, and the beaten.

⁴² "como o declara o seu mesmo Author no principio da sua obra" in Azevedo, *História de António Vieira*, vol. II, p. 375.

⁴³ "certificação algumas pessoas que viverão nos últimos mezes antes da sua morte e nos primeiros dias depois" in *ibid*.

⁴⁴ {Vieira, 2000 #409}

⁴⁵ Each time Vieira uses *authorities*, we can question whether he does so only with the purpose of showing how others have

for this particular book. Besides, by doing that, Vieira was protecting himself from further Inquisitional censorship.

Regarding the problem of whether it was legitimate to question the future, he says, there are warnings on how people should be aware of the signs of times so as to be ready at the right moment. In addition, he recalls the names of several commentators who had noticed that the world was aging, i.e., about to collapse. In addition, these signs, in which the decadence of both the world and the Church are reflected, can also be understood as signs of the presence of the antichrist, as Bernard of Clairvaux said. However, Vieira's most important argument is expressed when he says that as close to the end as one can be, as precise his interpretation of biblical prophecy will be.⁴⁶

The value of any knowledge regarding the future is arguable, surely. Whenever that same knowledge is necessary, however, humankind's quest is automatically validated, even if it concerns divine secrets. Therefore, the path Vieira suggests to be pursued is contrary to the one normally followed, i.e., he searches for a line of explanation based on an interpretation of the present toward the future, and not the common interpretation of the present based in the past. This interpretational shift was necessary, according to Vieira, to define with precision the time of the kingdom of Christ and of universal conversion to Christianity. Contrary to the apostles, who had been given, at least partially, the knowledge about the end of time when they received the Holy Spirit, those who followed them could legitimately question themselves about this subject, given its importance.⁴⁷ Consequently, Vieira builds a harmonized theory that allows him to justify the quest of the time of the final events without going against any sort of teaching or the orthodoxy of the Church, namely the principles set by Augustine.

Vieira discusses the universal preaching of the gospel and the period that would mediate between that event and the time of the consummation on earth of the kingdom of Christ.

Assuming that the apostles had been sent to preach the gospel to the entire world, Vieira asks with his customary acuteness of spirit about the extension, the need, the means, and which were the results of the Apostles' evangelization.⁴⁸ Vieira was getting ready to demonstrate how evangelization was intimately connected with the knowledge of the size of the world and with the resources available to preachers to reach such goals in those lost corners of the world. Based on this distinction, he demonstrates the key role of the Portuguese and the missionaries taken on board the discovery ships. This –the definition of the limits of the known world with which Vieira begins his exposition – was, in the words of the author, the only possible way to solve the problem concerning how incorrect ancient common knowledge regarding the apostles' universal preaching of the gospel was. In fact, this piece of information represented

already used the same arguments, or whether he really is attempting to protect himself from an eventual condemnation by the Inquisition.

⁴⁶ “et future quasi e vicino intueri vel clarius vel certe minus obscure possumus, sufragante et facem praeferente tempore, hoc est, optimo prophetiarum interprete” in Vieira, *Clavis prophetarum -- chave dos profetas*, p. 66.

⁴⁷ See the Apostles' example, *ibid.*, pp. 84-88.

⁴⁸ “quanta id extensione? Dubium quali necessitate? Dubium quibus mediis? Dubium per quae instrumenta? Dubium quo demum effectum, et fructum operis?” In *ibid.*, p. 94.

such a mistake that several authors mentioned that faith had reached neither the barbarians on the borders of the Roman Empire nor those at the center of the Empire during the first centuries. In the latter case, they mention that after Constantine's search for his son's atonement from death in all sects, religions, and creeds, he was finally illuminated by Christian faith. Thus, he opened the doors of the Empire to Christianity. Only as the official religion of the Empire did Christianity reach many peoples, which in a certain measure proves how it was impossible to accept that universal evangelization was the work of the apostles in the 1st century.

Another point in Vieira's arguments deals with the concept of sin, especially when connected with the knowledge of God. Contrary to what Jerome and Ambrose stated, Vieira claims it does not appear possible to admit that all human beings knew God. Therefore, it is impossible to accuse those peoples of any sort of idolatry. To stress the arguments used, Vieira warns his readers that it is better not to make any quick judgments. Consequently, the ignorance of those people who had not yet listened to the gospel excuses them from sin. This is why he writes that the barbarians who had not previously listened to the gospel were immune to all mortal guilt, as they were to all immortal penance.⁴⁹ Vieira will use this to support his theory concerning the possibility of existence among the *Bárbaros* ("barbarians") an invincible ignorance of God, contradicting what had been said before by Suárez and Granado. Vieira applies his own opinion regarding the rusticity of the intelligence of these peoples and of their corrupt customs. This was confirmed, for example, in works such as that of Jose Acosta, titled *Procuranda Indorum salute*, in which the author purported to prove that the Indians were of a sordid nature, destitute of innocence, and therefore lived in an environment of continuous corruption, where there was no space for reasoning. It would be the impossibility of getting to know God through their own means that confirmed his opinion.⁵⁰ Thus, the emphasis had to be put on the lack of knowledge of God instead of on his denial. Vieira continues by saying that the savages of that corner of the world could not deny what they did not know. This becomes Vieira's main argument concerning the nonexistence of natural sin among them. In addition, such affirmation can be used to distinguish between these peoples and those individuals who had chosen the path of heresy, since they had previous knowledge of God. The first, unlike the latter, had no judgment ability and therefore could not be convicted for that.

Vieira shows his awareness regarding the existing concept of the ages of the world – especially concerning the fact that the world of his time was living in its old age – to explain how the Fifth Empire was still to come. At the same time he says, "So the Empire promised by Daniel is not an Empire from the past, but one still to come."⁵¹ Thus, he was not yet living it.

In view of the above statements, it is possible to consider that António Vieira was following Daniel's scheme *à la lettre*. In fact, the narrative of Daniel introduced a scheme of 4 + 1 empires, according to

⁴⁹ "Vnde concluditur, Barbaros illos in sylvis nutritos, qui Evangelium non audierunt aut ex alio fonte ab innata Dei ignorantia purgati non fuerunt, sicut immunes sunt ab omni culpa mortali, ita ab omni immortali poena, hoc est aeternum duratura, liberos esse, neque ulla alia ratione obnoxios," in *ibid.*, p. 326.

⁵⁰ "ignorantiam ipsam non videat ineptitudinem suam ad Dei cognitionem per se ascendendi aperte confitentem?" In *ibid.*, pp. 352-54.

⁵¹ "Assim que o Império que promete Daniel não é Império já passado, senão que ainda está por vir." In *ibid.*, p. 266.

which the Fifth Empire would happen after the defeat of the last horn of the fourth beast. Vieira apparently does the same, although he introduces two existing distinctive moments of conversion. Hence, it is impossible to confirm that Vieira was thinking exclusively about Daniel's narrative of the end of time when composing his theory. The need for conversion is directly implied with Christianity, not with Judaism, and Daniel was a product of the latter. Therefore, it is urgent to reconsider Vieira's theorization in light of the scheme proposed by the editor of Revelation. This text is in fact a result of Christianity and is directly affected by the life of Christ on earth, the role of the apostles, and the hope for a second coming of Christ that would anticipate the beginning of the eschatological kingdom.

Antônio Vieira, the famous Jesuit of the Amazon River, while writing these three works created a complete and thorough eschatological system in which he combined the content of the books of Daniel and Revelation with the later interpretation done by authors such as Augustine and Fiore. His goal was to explain how the Portuguese revolution of 1640 was just another step toward the establishment of the divine kingdom of God on earth. According to him, the despicable *Iberian Union* was a necessary tribulation. Likewise the Israelites, the Portuguese needed to endure and live through by faith. The Portuguese were God's chosen nation, thus they had nothing to fear. Likewise, the Israelites during Antioch IV kingdom or Christians during the first century of our Era.

While identifying Portugal as the heir of the Roman Empire, he engages in thorough description of the nature of the kingdom to be established. According to the Jesuit, the pope and the Portuguese king, later the emperor after his conquest of Jerusalem that follows his defeat of the Ottomans, are the vicar's of Christ on earth. It was their responsibility to lead Christianity toward the promised kingdom, and to make sure that world evangelization and conversion to Christianity would be undertaken. Vieira, a man of his time, although a faithful Jesuit, underlined in a clear and unmistakable fashion the role to be played by the Portuguese monarch. By doing it, once again the concept of political apocalypticism became alive. Further, this underlining of the importance of the role of the *Last Emperor*, is a clear challenge of the authority of Rome. Let us not forget that Rome took almost sixty years to recognize the new Portuguese independence and was far too dependent of the Spanish monarchs. Again, Vieira engaged in a political position while undertaking his biblical exegesis.

In this short description of the content of Antônio Vieira's eschatological systematization it is possible to observe in part the complexity of his work. Vieira was a man of faith, a statesman, and above all, a man of his time. His work translates a close relationship between the orthodoxy of the Church and the needs and goals of the Portuguese Empire. Most importantly, his work demonstrates how the content of books like Daniel and Revelation were present in the life of seventeenth-century European minds, and how their content had also impacted in the enterprise of Portuguese overseas discoveries.

Returning to our initial question of how can we compare Daniel, Revelation, and the Portuguese Revolution of 1640, we shall say without hesitation that not only the belief in a better time to follow, on divine intervention and predestination, and especially, in a quick coming of the promised kingdom of God are common to the three narratives. Furthermore, the timeless character of Daniel and Revelation, especially regarding the succession of empires and the establishment of the divine kingdom of God, is

used to explain why the Portuguese population was such a good replacement for the Israelites and Christians of such texts. Like them, they were God's chosen nation and they were enduring one of the harshest tribulations ever in the sense that they were being persecuted and their political independence questioned. But, once again, they would be delivered by God if they endured. Thus, not only the Portuguese independence would be recognized, as the Portuguese monarch was to play one of the most important roles of Christendom: lead it toward the establishment of the divine kingdom of God on earth. Therefore, as the Israelites described in Daniel or the Christians of Revelation, the Portuguese would be delivered from their pain, and be rewarded by God with the most distinguished role ever.

It is, however, necessary to make one last remark. Neither of the texts calls directly for action, i.e., for war. They all say how their listeners should endure the hardship sent to them by God. Furthermore, they all accentuate how the so-called "tribulation" was nothing else than part of God's divine plan, describing thus the existence of a predestined history.

Vieira appears to have followed the footsteps of the authors of Daniel and Revelation as he forecasts that the kingdom of God is at hand and identifies the major characters. The main difference, would be that Vieira was not describing an *ex eventu* prophecy: he was writing at the same time that the events he described were taking place and his forecasts regarded the future. Notwithstanding, and although Vieira may be described in terms of a prophetic seer and his work as an example of eschatological prophecy, it is necessary to remember that he never at any point of his work, or life, assumed to be doing so. He was, in his own words, an interpreter of biblical texts and therefore, a *historian of the future*.